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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Mercer County Community College (MCCC) to determine the elements which contribute to student attrition. Two separate groups of non-returning students were surveyed in 1982 and 1984. The first group was composed of students who attended MCCC in spring 1981, but did not return in fall 1981 or spring 1982. The second group consisted of students who attended in fall 1982, but did not return in spring or fall 1983. Survey responses were obtained from 41% (N=277) of the full-time and 27% (N=621) of the part-time non-returning students in the spring group; and 40% (N=184) of the full-time and 33% (N=992) of the part-time non-returning students in the fall group. Study findings included the following: (1) transferring, financial problems, and job responsibilities were among the most frequently cited reasons for not returning to MCCC; (2) the most common reason for not returning for the spring group was transfer to another school, while job responsibilities were the biggest influence among the fall group; (3) increased personal/family responsibilities and job responsibilities were the major reasons for attrition among part-timers; (4) the fall-to-fall full-time non-returnees had a larger percentage of blacks and females than the spring-to-spring full-time group; (5) 32% of the spring group were working in a field related to their major compared to 21% of the fall group; (6) over 80% of both groups stated they would recommend MCCC to a friend; and (7) 43% of the full-time spring and fall non-returnees had plans to return to Mercer in the future. The questionnaire is appended. (EJV)

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TECHNICAL REPORT
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

85-03

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Non-Returning Students: Full Time and Part Time

Spring 1981 - Spring 1982
and
Fall 1982 - Fall 1983

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August, 1984

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes data obtained from the results of questionnaires which surveyed two groups of non-returning students. These surveys were conducted in an attempt to determine the elements which contribute to student attrition. Factors associated with non-return were examined by comparing the characteristics of these students and by analyzing the responses to the questionnaires. Some major findings of the study are:

- The most frequently stated reasons for non-return among the spring full-timers was transferring to another school and financial problems, while increased job responsibilities and financial problems were the greatest concern of the fall full-time students.
- The most frequently stated reasons for non-return among both the spring and fall groups' part-timers were increased personal/family responsibilities and also job responsibilities.
- Seventy-one percent of the full-time spring non-returnees chose to work and attend school compared to 63% of the fall group.
- Thirty-two percent of the spring group were working in a field related to their major at Mercer compared to 21% of the fall group.
- Sixty-eight percent of the spring non-returners had continued their education compared to only 48% of the fall group. Over 30% of both the spring and fall full-time non-returnees continued their education at an out-of-state school.
- Over 80% of both the spring and fall groups stated that they would recommend Mercer to a friend.
- Forty-three percent of the full-time spring and fall non-returnees had plans to return to Mercer in the future.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Due to an overwhelming need to investigate the reason for decreasing enrollment, a study was undertaken to survey those students who did not return over a period of two semesters. This report is a compilation of data on two separate groups of non-returning students. The first group was composed of those who attended Mercer during the Spring 1981 semester but did not return in either the Fall 1981 or the Spring 1982 semesters. This survey was conducted in the summer of 1982 and is documented in the technical report written by Julia J. Aegerter, titled "Non-returning Students: Full-time and Part-time, Spring 1981 - Spring 1982" (November, 1982). The second group was those students who attended MCCC during the Fall 1982 semester but did not return in either the Spring 1983 semester or the Fall 1983 semester. This survey was conducted over the Spring and Summer of 1984. Students with 60 or more cumulative credits were eliminated from both the survey populations.

The data was drawn from two surveys: The Full-time Non-Returning Student Questionnaire and the Part-time Non-Returning Student Questionnaire, which were administered to both the spring and fall groups. (See Appendix A).

B. Methodology

Table 1 shows the return rates for both the full-time and part-time non-returning student questionnaires. The number of students in the survey populations of the spring and fall groups were different. There were less full-time and more part-time students in the non-returning fall group. The overall response rates, however, were very similar.

Table 1

Population Size and Return Rates

	Spring 81 - Spring 82 Respondents		Fall 82 - Fall 83 Respondents	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Survey Population	683	2279	460	3016
Mailings:				
First wave	109 (16%)	363 (16%)	71 (15%)	625 (21%)
Second wave	81 (12%)	258 (11%)	43 (9%)	367 (12%)
Third wave	--	--	20 (4%)	--
Telephone Follow-up	87 (13%)	--	50 (11%)	--
Total Valid and Usable Responses	277 (41%)	621 (27%)	184 (40%)	992 (33%)

III. STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The non-returning student population was compared to the entire class of the semester in which they attended. The spring group was compared to the Spring 1981 class and the fall group to the Fall 1982 class. The two groups were compared on the characteristics of residence, sex and ethnicity. In general, each of the two groups of non-returning students looks similar to the class of their last semester attended. A few major differences which didemerge were that among the spring non-returnees, the ethnic distribution showes that a larger percentage of full-time Blacks did not return while both the full-time and part-time Caucasians were more likely to return. Just the opposite occurs among the fall group where both the full-time and part-time Caucasians were less likely to return, while the fuil-time Blacks were more likely to return. In addition, there were more part-time females and less males who did not return among both the fall and spring groups. (see Tables 2a and b).

There were also major differences between the spring and fall non-returning student populations. Compared to the spring non-returnees both the full-time and part-time fall group had less in-county and more out-of-county students, more Caucasians and less Blacks and Hispanics. While both the spring and fall part-time groups had a higher percentage of females compared to the full-timers the fall group had less females compared to the spring group (see Table 2a).

Table 2a

Non-Returning Population Demographic Characteristics

	Spring 81 - Spring 82		Fall 82 - Fall 83	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Residence				
In-county	81%	88%	70%	85%
Out-of County	17%	9%	25%	12%
Out-of State	2%	3%	5%	3%
Sex				
Male	52%	36%	52%	41%
Female	48%	64%	48%	59%
Ethnicity				
American Indian	1%	0%	1%	0%
Black	27%	12%	11%	12%
Caucasian	62%	66%	80%	67%
Foreign	1%	1%	1%	1%
Hispanic	6%	3%	2%	2%
Oriental	1%	2%	1%	2%
Unknown	2%	16%	4%	16%

Table 2b

Demographic Characteristics of the Entire Student Body

	Spring 1981		Fall 1982	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Residence				
In-county	77%	89%	75%	89%
Out-of County	21%	9%	20%	9%
Out-of-State	2%	2%	5%	2%
Sex				
Male	49%	42%	49%	53%
Female	51%	58%	51%	47%
Ethnicity				
American Indian	1%	0%	1%	0%
Black	19%	12%	17%	9%
Caucasian	72%	72%	72%	59%
Foreign	1%	0%	2%	0%
Hispanic	4%	2%	3%	2%
Oriental	1%	2%	1%	2%
Unknown	2%	12%	4%	28%

IV. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF NON-RETURNING STUDENTS

A. Demographic Characteristics of the Survey Respondents

This years respondents to the Fall 1983 Non-Returning Student Survey looked very similar to the Spring 1982 survey respondents with a few exceptions. The fall to fall full-time non-returnees had a larger percentage of Blacks and females and a smaller percentage of Caucasians and males compared to the spring to spring full-time group. Among the part-timers, there were less Caucasian respondents and also less males represented in the fall group. Characteristics describing these students are presented in Table 3.

When the non-returning students who responded to the survey were compared to those who did not respond, some differences did emerge. Among the spring non-returnees, the full-time Blacks are underrepresented and both the full-time and part-time Caucasian are overrepresented. The fall group had an overrepresentation of both full-time Blacks and part-time females and an underrepresentation of Caucasians. One should therefore be careful about assuming that the full-time and part-time students who answered the survey were representative of all non-returning students.

Table 3

Demographic Characteristics of the Survey Repondents

	Spring 81 - Spring 82		Fall 82 - Fall 83	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Ethnicity				
American Indian	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	2 (0%)
Black	56 (20%)	65 (10%)	49 (26%)	96 (9%)
Caucasian	200 (72%)	462 (74%)	125 (66%)	521 (47%)
Foreign	3 (1%)	3 (1%)	0 (0%)	7 (1%)
Hispanic	10 (4%)	11 (2%)	6 (3%)	11 (1%)
Oriental	2 (1%)	13 (2%)	0 (0%)	12 (1%)
Unknown	4 (1%)	67 (11%)	7 (4%)	460 (41%)
Total	277 (100%)	621 (100%)	188 (100%)	1109 (100%)
Sex				
Male	136 (49%)	233 (38%)	83 (44%)	385 (35%)
Female	141 (51%)	388 (62%)	105 (56%)	724 (65%)
Total	277 (100%)	621 (100%)	188 (100%)	1109 (100%)

B. Item Analysis

The survey questionnaire included items which asked about the student's original goals in coming to Mercer, whether or not these goals have been achieved, reasons for non-return, and employment and educational information about their experiences after leaving Mercer. The students were also asked to evaluate the student services and to make comments on any ideas for improving Mercers' student services and programs.

1. Student Goals

The goals of the non-returning fall students, both immediate and long range were somewhat similar to the spring non-returning group. The majority of the full-time students from both groups came to Mercer with an immediate intention of obtaining an Associates degree and a longer range goal of preparing for a career. It is of interest to note that only 3% of the fall full-timers had intentions of earning a certificate compared to 11% of the spring group. Of the part-timers, thirty eight percent of the fall group and 36% of the spring group planned to earn an Associates degree.

The fall group stated that they were either taking courses for personal interest (34%) or trying to improve their job skills (32%), while the spring group's main goals were to improve their job skills (33%) and prepare for a career (30%). Compared to the spring group, a larger percentage of fall part-time respondents were taking courses for personal interest (34% vs. 23%).

This year only 7% of the full-time students and 21% of the part-

timers felt they had achieved initial goal compared to the spring group when 18% of the full-timers and 20% of the part-time students had reached their goal. Although the majority of both groups stated that their objective had not been reached, the spring full-timers appear to be more satisfied than the fall full-time group (see Table 4).

Table 4

Student Goals

	Spring 81 - Spring 82		Fall 82 - Fall 83	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Intentional Degree				
Associates	70%	38%	79%	36%
Certificate	11%	5%	3%	6%
None	19%	57%	18%	58%
Main Educational Goal				
Improve job skills	15%	33%	14%	32%
Prepare for first career	55%	30%	44%	10%
Career change	a	a	12%	15%
Transfer credit	20%	9%	16%	5%
Personal interest	4%	23%	4%	34%
Undecided	6%	4%	10%	4%
Goal Achieved				
Yes	18%	20%	7%	21%
No	73%	71%	83%	67%
Not sure	9%	9%	10%	12%

[a] Option not offered on spring survey.

2. Reasons for Non-Return

Among the full-time students, the spring group had different reasons for non-return compared to the fall group. The largest percentage (28%) of the spring group indicated that transferring to another school was their main reason for their non-return while the fall non-returnees stated that increased job responsibilities was their greatest concern

(33%). Also, both groups ranked financial problems high on their priority list. With the part-timers, the largest percentage of both groups stated that increased family responsibilities and job responsibilities were their main reasons for not returning to Mercer (see Table 5).

Table 5

Reasons for Non-Return

	Spring 81 - Spring 82		Fall 82 - Fall 83	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Reason				
Increased job responsibilities	19%	20%	33%	17%
Financial problems	25%	16%	24%	12%
Personal/family responsibilities	12%	22%	12%	19%
Transferred to another school	28%	6%	13%	5%
Took a year off	10%	12%	13%	11%
Not doing well academically	13%	5%	16%	5%
Not satisfied with instructor(s)	9%	7%	9%	8%
Health problems	5%	8%	11%	8%
Course(s) needed not offered/ cancelled	6%	11%	3%	6%
Not encouraged by instructor(s)	6%	4%	10%	5%
Transportation problems	6%	4%	11%	4%
Frustrated with Mercer	6%	2%	6%	4%
Got married	4%	3%	7%	3%
Practical experience	3%	1%	5%	3%
Other reasons	28%	27%	18%	24%

Since such a large percentage of students gave other reasons for non-return, the fall group's other explanations are further detailed.[1] Additional reasons for not returning listed by the 33 former full-time students (18%) were usually related to a change in educational or career goals (8), or they were either undecided about their goals, they didn't know what they wanted or discovered college wasn't for them and didn't

[1]The spring groups' other reason for non-return are listed in Appendix A of the technical report #83-04.

meet their needs (11). Others joined the armed services (5), moved out of the area (3), or couldn't handle going to school and holding a job due to time conflicts (3).

The 263 former part-time students (24%) gave similar reasons for not returning. They included a change in educational or career goals (26), the time conflict with job and school or simply couldn't handle both (13), college wasn't what they expected, didn't meet needs or they didn't know what they wanted (8). Three others joined the armed services and 15 moved out of the area. The former part-time students also had entirely unique reasons for not returning. They included not having time to dedicate to school (9), employer no longer paying tuition (3), already had a degree (6), pursuing other interests (14), want to take courses closer to home (2), course(s) completed already met their need or interests (8). These former part-time students also stated problems and complaints with Mercer as reasons for not returning. They included poor advisement or poor placement in courses (6), courses not offered at convenient times (6), poor selection of courses at JKC (3), the feeling that faculty and staff do not care (4), problems with instructors (5), lost funding for Senior Citizen Centers (37).

3. Employment Data

The employment information given by the respondents is presented in Table 6. This data indicates that a larger percentage of the spring group chose to work and attend school compared to the fall group (71% of the spring full-time vs. 63% of the fall full-time). Of the full-timers, 80% of the spring non-returnees were working at the time of the survey compared to 77% of the fall group. It should also be noted that

a larger percentage of fall non-returnees are working on a full-time basis and less on a part-time basis compared to the spring non-returnees. In addition, 32% of the spring group reported working in a field related to their major at Mercer compared to only 21% of the fall group. Thirty-seven of the spring non-returnees were looking for a job at the time of the study as were 42% of the fall former students. The most popular occupation listed by the part-time fall and spring groups was a secretary.

Table 6

Employment Data

	Spring 81 - Spring 82		Fall 82 - Fall 83	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Working While Attending Mercer				
Yes, full-time	17%	70%	20%	63%
Yes, part-time	54%	13%	43%	12%
No	29%	17%	37%	25%
Working at the time of the Survey				
Yes, full-time	56%	a	62%	a
Yes, part-time	24%	a	15%	a
No	20%	a	23%	a

[a]The part-time survey did not include this question.

4. Transfer Education Data

Sixty-eight of the spring to spring non-returnees stated that they had continued their education in some manner (47% of the full-timers and 21% of the part-timers). Only 48% of the fall-to-fall group reported pursuing further education (35% of the full-timers and 13% of the part-timers). A further breakdown is shown in Table 7. Table 8 details the transfer institutions attended by the non-returnees. Of the full-timers, 37% of the spring group and 32% of the fall group transferred to an out-

of-state school. See Appendix B for a complete listing of the other schools attended by the fall full-timers and the field of study pursued.

Table 7

Further Education

	Spring 81 - Spring 82	Fall 82 - Fall 83
Full-time Students		
In-service/On-the-job-training	5%	9%
Not for a degree	6%	5%
Part-time in a degree program	4%	6%
Full-time in a degree program	32%	14%
No	53%	66%
Part-time Students		
Yes, full-time	10%	7%
Yes, part-time	11%	6%
No	79%	87%

Table 8

Transfer Institutions

	Spring 81 - Spring 82		Fall 82 - Fall 83	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
College				
Other NJ Community Colleges	7 (7%)	7 (6%)	12 (27%)	15 (12%)
Rider College	6 (6%)	12 (10%)	2 (5%)	13 (10%)
Rutgers University	5 (5%)	19 (16%)	2 (5%)	11 (9%)
Trenton State College	21 (22%)	25 (20%)	5 (11%)	39 (32%)
Other In-State Schools	22 (23%)	28 (23%)	9 (20%)	14 (11%)
Out-of State Schools	35 (37%)	30 (25%)	14 (32%)	32 (26%)
Totals	96 (100%)	121 (100%)	44 (100%)	124 (100%)

5. Opinions of Mercer

An overwhelming majority of the respondents stated that they would recommend Mercer to a friend (81% of the full-time and 89% of the part-time spring group and 87% of the full-time and 88% of the part-time fall group). This positive attitude is again reflected in the fact that slightly less than half of both the spring and fall non-returnees had

plans to return to Mercer in the future (43% of the full-time spring and fall non-returnees and 51% of the spring and 47% of the fall part-timers) (see Table 9).

Table 9

Future Plans to Attend Mercer

	Spring 81 - Spring 82		Fall 82 - Fall 83	
	FT	PT	FT	PT
Response				
Yes, full-time	17%	4%	11%	3%
Yes, part-time	26%	47%	32%	44%
No	26%	11%	18%	8%
Not sure	31%	38%	39%	45%

The non-returning students were also asked to evaluate the usefulness of Mercer's student services. Only the part-time students were given this option in the spring, however, both the full and part-timers were asked for their views on the fall survey. The spring part-time responses were very similar to the fall part-time group.[2] The results of the fall groups are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Evaluation of Student Services: Fall 82 - Fall 83

Full-time	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Very Useful	Did Not Use
Service (N)[a]				
Academic Advisement (146)	27%	33%	16%	24%
Academic Testing Center (140)	45%	32%	8%	15%
Counseling (152)	24%	25%	20%	32%
Financial Aid (138)	33%	9%	7%	51%
Job Placement Assistance (131)	8%	5%	8%	79%
Library/Learning Resource Services (144)	49%	28%	4%	19%
Registration Procedures (137)	25%	47%	20%	7%
Student Activities (133)	16%	24%	11%	49%
Student Records (133)	17%	30%	8%	45%
Tutoring Service (136)	10%	12%	5%	73%

[a] N = The number that responded to that option out of 188 respondents.

[2] The part-time spring groups' evaluation of student services can be found in Table 6 of the technical report #83-04.

Table 10 (continued)

Part-time Service (N)[a]	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Very Useful	Did Not Use
Academic Advisement (841)	14%	21%	13%	52%
Academic Testing Center (828)	25%	21%	7%	47%
Counseling (836)	10%	15%	12%	63%
Financial Aid (825)	7%	2%	3%	88%
Job Placement Assistance (808)	4%	4%	3%	89%
Library/Learning Resource Services (813)	27%	23%	3%	47%
Registration Procedures (835)	33%	29%	18%	20%
Student Activities (823)	7%	8%	4%	81%
Student Records (808)	12%	13%	6%	69%
Tutoring Service (821)	6%	5%	3%	86%

[a]N = The number that responded to that option of of 1,109 respondents

6. Student Comments

As a final measure, the former students were asked to give their views on what Mercer could do to better serve its students. The fall group offered more ideas for improvement compared to the spring group. Thirty-nine percent of the full-time respondents and 41% of the part-timers in the fall group made comments. Because this question specifically asks for 'changes' that could be made at Mercer to help make it a better place for students, the majority of remarks were suggestions for improvements and these are the ones with which this report is concerned. It is important to note however, that a good number of the former students also took this opportunity to offer favorable comments and some indirected that no changes were necessary. The majority of the subjective responses dealt with academic matters. The students' complaints centered around advisement and counseling, registration, instructor attitude and competence, course scheduling and class size. It should also be noted that quite a few of the part-time comments came

from senior citizens who were concerned with program cancellations at their centers due to lack of funds.

The comments of the Fall non-returnees are summarized in Appendix C. Refer to the technical report #83-04 for the Spring groups' comments.

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the results of this study it is evident that increased job responsibilities and financial problems were the most frequently stated reasons for non-return. The data also indicates that a large percentage of the former students chose to work and attend school. Thus, it can be inferred that the time element could be related to attrition.

The student comments show that there was some dissatisfaction with courses, instructors, academic advisement/counseling and registration. This is again reflected in the numerical data in Table 5 which shows that a little less than 30% of all the non-returning respondents, both spring and fall, gave similar reasons for non-return such as dissatisfaction with instructor, course problems or a frustration with Mercer in general. Since these are areas which Mercer can control, these concerns should be addressed and future efforts should be directed towards resolving some of these problems.

Appendices A, B and C:

A. Summaries of the Full-time and Part-time Student Questionnaires

B. Schools Attended (Field of Study): Full-time Fall Respondents

C. Student Comments: Full-time and Part-time

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APPENDIX A
FULL-TIME
NON-RETURNING STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
FALL, 1983

(BLANK) N=188

IF LABEL IS NOT CORRECT, PLEASE PRINT CORRECTIONS BELOW:

1. When you first entered Mercer, did you plan to complete an Associate Degree or Certificate program? (Please check one box.)

	148	☐ Yes, complete an Associate Degree program (2 years)
(1)	6	☐ Yes, complete a Certificate program (1 year)
	33	☐ No

2. What is your main educational goal? (Please check one box.)

	25	☐ Improving my job skills
(3)	81	☐ Preparing for my first career
	23	☐ Preparing for a career change
	30	☐ Getting transfer credit
	8	☐ Taking selected courses for my own personal interest
	18	☐ I am undecided/don't know

3. Do you feel you have reached your goal?

	12	☐ Yes - (If yes, skip to question #5.)
(3)	154	☐ No
	19	☐ Not sure

4. Why did you decide not to return to Mercer this year? (Please check as many as apply.)

(164)	24	☐ I decided to take a year off.
(172)	16	☐ I was not satisfied with the instruction and/or the instructors.
(170)	18	☐ I did not feel encouraged or supported by my instructors.
(182)	6	☐ The courses I needed were not offered/were cancelled.
(167)	21	☐ I had health or physical problems.
(143)	45	☐ I had financial problems.
(126)	62	☐ I got a job/my job responsibilities or working hours were increased.
(175)	13	☐ I got married/made plans to get married.
(165)	23	☐ I had personal or family responsibilities/increased responsibilities at home.

4. (continued)

(179) 9 ☐ I wanted to get some practical experience.
(158) 30 ☐ I was not doing well academically.
(164) 24 ☐ I transferred to another school.
(168) 20 ☐ I had transportation problems.
(176) 12 ☐ In general, I was frustrated with the way Mercer was run.

(155) 33 ☐ Other reasons and/or general comments:_____

SEE PAGES 9 AND 10

5. Do you think you will return to Mercer in the future? (Please check one box.)

(1) 21 ☐ Yes, as a full-time student
60 ☐ Yes, as a part-time student
33 ☐ No, I will definitely not return
73 ☐ I am not sure

6. Were you working your last semester at Mercer (Fall 1982)? (Please check one box.)

(3) 37 ☐ Yes, I was working full-time (35 hours per week or more)
79 ☐ Yes, I was working part-time (fewer than 35 hours per week)
69 ☐ No, I was not working

7. Are you working at the present time? (Please check one box.)

(2) 116 ☐ Yes, I am now working full-time (35 hours per week or more)
28 ☐ Yes, I am now working part-time (fewer than 35 hours per week)
42 ☐ No, I am not working now.

8. If you are working at the present time, is your job related to your program or course of study you took at Mercer?

(35) 32 ☐ Yes 121 ☐ No

9. Are you currently looking for a new or different job?

(14) 73 ☐ Yes 101 ☐ No

10. Have you continued your education beyond your program of study at Mercer in Spring 1983 or Fall 1983? (Please select only one response.)

SEE APPENDIX B

116 ☐ No, I have not continued my education.

18 ☐ Yes, I am taking/have taken in-service or on-the-job training.

9 ☐ Yes, I am taking/have taken college courses, but not for a degree at _____.
(Please enter the name of your college.)

(10) 10 ☐ Yes, I am/was a part-time student at _____,
(Name of college.)
working towards a degree in _____.
(Name of program.)

25 ☐ Yes, I am/was a full-time student at _____,
(Name of college.)
working towards a degree in _____.
(Name of program.)

11. Would you recommend Mercer to a friend?

(5) 159 ☐ Yes 7 ☐ No 17 ☐ Not sure

12. How useful were the services listed below in meeting your individual needs as a student?

		Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Very Useful	Did Not Use
(42)	a. Academic Advisement	39	48	23	36
(48)	b. Academic Testing Center	63	45	11	21
(36)	c. Counseling	36	38	30	48
(50)	d. Financial Aid	46	12	10	70
(57)	e. Job Placement Assistance	11	6	11	103
(44)	f. Library/Learning Resources Services	70	41	5	28
(51)	g. Registration Procedures	34	65	28	10
(55)	h. Student Activities	21	32	15	65
(55)	i. Student Records	23	40	11	59
(52)	j. Tutoring Service	14	16	7	99

13. What changes should be made at Mercer to help make it a better place for students? (Please be honest! Use another sheet of paper if necessary.)

(73 RESPONSES)
SEE APPENDIX C

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX A
PART-TIME
NON-RETURNING STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE
FALL, 1983

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

(BLANK) N= 1109

IF LABEL IS NOT CORRECT, PLEASE PRINT CORRECTIONS BELOW:

1. When you first entered Mercer, did you plan to complete an Associate Degree or Certificate program? (Please check one box.)

382 ☐ Yes, complete an Associate Degree program (2 years)
(38) 69 ☐ Yes, complete a Certificate program (1 year)
620 ☐ No

2. What is your main educational goal? (Please check one box.)

343 ☐ Improving my job skills
(49) 107 ☐ Preparing for my first career
159 ☐ Preparing for a career change
50 ☐ Getting transfer credit
358 ☐ Taking selected courses for my own personal interest
43 ☐ I am undecided/don't know

3. Do you feel you have reached your goal?

208 ☐ Yes - (If yes, skip to question #5.)
(106) 676 ☐ No
119 ☐ Not sure

4. Why did you decide not to return to Mercer this year? (Please check as many as apply.)

(993) 116 ☐ I decided to take a year off.
(1024) 85 ☐ I was not satisfied with the instruction and/or the instructors.
(1055) 54 ☐ I did not feel encouraged or supported by my instructors.
(1041) 68 ☐ The courses I needed were not offered/were cancelled.
(1021) 88 ☐ I had health or physical problems.
(978) 131 ☐ I had financial problems.
(918) 191 ☐ I got a job/my job responsibilities or working hours were increased.
(1079) 30 ☐ I got married/made plans to get married.
(900) 209 ☐ I had personal or family responsibilities/increased responsibilities at home.

4. (continued)

(1078) 31 ☐ I wanted to get some practical experience.
(1052) 57 ☐ I was not doing well academically.
(1055) 54 ☐ I transferred to another school.
(1062) 47 ☐ I had transportation problems.
(1061) 48 ☐ In general, I was frustrated with the way Mercer was run.

(846) 263 ☐ Other reason(s) SEE PAGE 10

5. Do you think you will return to Mercer in the future? (Please check one box.)

(68) 26 ☐ Yes, as a full-time student
458 ☐ Yes, as a part-time student
89 ☐ No, I will definitely not return
468 ☐ I am not sure

6. Have you attended another college or university since leaving Mercer?

890 ☐ No, I have not attended another college.
(92) 70 ☐ Yes, as a full-time student at SEE APPENDIX B (Name of college)
57 ☐ Yes, as a part-time student at SEE APPENDIX B (Name of college)

7. Were you working your last semester at Mercer (Fall 1982)? (Please check one box.)

(80) 652 ☐ Yes, I was working full-time (35 hours per week or more).
118 ☐ Yes, I was working part-time (fewer than 35 hours per week).
259 ☐ No, I was not working.

8. What is your present occupation?

SEE APPENDIX C

9. Would you recommend Mercer to a friend?

(49) 937 ☐ Yes 31 ☐ No 92 ☐ Not sure

10. How useful were the services listed below in meeting your individual needs as a student?

	SEE TABLE 10	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Very Useful	Did Not Use
(268)	a. Academic Advisement	116	178	108	439
(281)	b. Academic Testing Center	208	174	59	387
(273)	c. Counseling	87	122	96	531
(284)	d. Financial Aid	57	18	28	722
(301)	e. Job Placement Assistance	29	30	28	721
(296)	f. Library/Learning Resources Services	221	183	26	383
(274)	g. Registration Procedures	275	244	146	170
(286)	h. Student Activities	54	69	37	663
(301)	i. Student Records	94	106	48	560
(288)	j. Tutoring Service	51	37	23	710

11. Please feel free to make any comments you feel will be helpful to us in improving student services and programs.

(45)

(452 RESPONSES)

SEE APPENDIX C

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX B

Schools Attended (Field of Study): Fall Full-time Respondents

Taking College Courses, but not for a Degree (N=9)

Brookdale Community College
Burlington County College (Accounting)
Bucks County Community College ***
Morris County College
Ocean County College
Somerset County College

Attended Part-time (N=10)

Brookdale Community College (Liberal Arts)
Burlington County College
Glassboro State College (Psychology)
Mercer County Vocational Tech (Certificate in Carpentry)
Middlesex County College (Computer Science)
Temple University (Business Administration)
Trenton State College*** (Art Education, English, CPA in Accounting)
University of Anchorage Alaska (Electronics)

Attended Full-time (N=25)

Bucks County Community College
Computer Learning Center (Data Processing)
City University of New York (CUNY)
Elizabethtown College, PA (English)
Fashion Institute of Technology, NY (Fashion Merchandising and Designing)
Florida Institute of Technology (B.S. in Air Commerce/Flight Technology)
Glassboro State College** (Psychology, Advertising Design)
Glouster County College (Arts and Sciences)
Middlesex County College** (Electrical Engineering Technology, Nursing)
New Jersey Catholic Seminary (Philosophy)
North Carolina A & T State University (Accounting)
Ocean County College (Education)
Rider College** (Business Administration, Biology)
Rutgers University** (Nursing, Certificate in Science)
St. Francis Medical Center Nursing School (R.N.)
Trenton State College** (Nursing, English/Communications)
University of Albuquerque (Data Management)
University of Wisconsin (Interior Design)
Wichita State University (Social Services)
William Patterson College (Nursing)

** Cited by 2 respondents
*** Cited by 3 respondents

APPENDIX C

Full-time Comments

Activities

- More activities

-Trips to other learning institutions

Advisement/Counseling Services

- Counselors should be more understanding of those working full time.

- Provide more efficient and pertinent academic advisement.

- Follow-up advisement for those who no longer attend MCCC.

- Counselors should be available more often, they aren't in their offices enough.

Faculty

- Instructors should show more encouragement and interest towards students, set aside time, give students extra help, smaller classes, more class participation. (mentioned by 5)

- More tutors; more individualized tutoring in accounting, economics, and statistics. (mentioned by 2)

- Office hours are very important and should be taken more seriously.

- Need change in certain teachers attitudes towards students.

- Teachers should take their jobs more seriously.

Housing & Transportaion

- On-campus housing (mentioned by 3)

- Assist students who live 20 or more miles away in finding commuting partners or car pools. (mentioned by 2)

Job Placement

- More help given to students in finding jobs, especially for older students; better job placement. (mentioned by 2)

Library

- Library should be a quiet spot; like a chapel. Also, confine loud music to a smaller area.

- Library should be expanded and updated.

Parking & Security

- Parking lot not well lit; should have covered walk from parking lot or moved closer. (mentioned by 3)

- More security outside at night.

Miscellaneous

- Hard to book an airplane (Flight Class) on days of classes.

- Information to night students should be more available, there seems to be a gap in day and night studies.

- MCCC should participate in student loans.

- Traumatic experience to take exam at Rutgers within time limit instead of at leisure like at MCCC.

APPENDIX C

Part-time Comments

Advisement/Counseling Services

- Counseling services need improving. (mentioned by 7)
- Night student should be required to see a counselor before starting a degree program - I didn't know about matriculating.
- Counseling for PT evening students.
- See to it that every student has counseling including PT'ers.
- Advisors should know more about all courses, so students aren't mislead.
- Advisory and Counseling services should be brought to the attention of students better.
- More and better advisors.
- Academic Advisement and Counseling should be more specific in areas of course selection and credit transfers.
- Get some competent advisors.
- Need stronger and more developed academic advisement service.

Courses/Programs

- Have classes start later so more can attend after work. (mentioned by 3)
- Offer more courses in Trenton and JKC. (mentioned by 3)
- Took programming course - waited hours for turn-around - can't afford time when you're a single parent. (mentioned by 2)
- Increase the number of courses offered thru extension program - important service for FT working PT students. (mentioned by 2)
- Typing courses required all work be done in class - students don't have time to complete, denied permission to stay later, later in the course I was hopelessly behind and couldn't catch up. (mentioned by 2)
- No hands-on experience in Intro to Word Processing on word processor CRT since there was only one - I should have dropped the course. (mentioned by 2)
- Enhance EE Department - more real-life, experience oriented program.
- French program needs more out of class activities - i.e., movies, french guests, etc.
- Student assistants for Basic and Pascal computer labs very poor; student assistant for Fortran was good, the rest were not much help.

Courses/Programs (continued)

- Interested in course for conversational English (communicating in English), speaking English for Spanish people.
- Computer classes were too large.
- Offer drafting classes in the evenings.
- There were too many tests for DP101 course, it was time consuming and frustrating never knowing which questions you had wrong.
- The development of some more interesting courses may be the trick to keeping up the good work and service to the community.
- Would like more accounting courses at South Hunterdon H.S.
- Wanted to take course at Fisher Jr High but time was inconvenient.
- Computer course wasn't geared for someone who knew nothing about computers.
- Interested in Graphic Art related to Computer Art.
- More Tele-courses should run on Channels 12 and 52, not just cable.
- Offer more language and culture courses.
- Large numbers (too many) of students in class, felt as if I wasn't getting much out of lessons.
- More Saturday and TV courses.
- Course instruction should return to the Trenton Board of Education.
- There is a tremendous need for cultural classes at the Jewish Community Center.
- Would like courses or lectures on present day topics.
- Not enough working equipment for all student in typing class, got behind because we had to wait - unfair because we paid for our course.
- X-ray technician program should be made PT, this is the career I'm interested in.
- Would like to see non-credit courses on house nutrition - evening class.
- Expand Visual Arts - more and better facilities, classes.
- PT student don't get the respect and recognition FT students get; courses available to them to complete a certificate, the proper prerequisites needed aren't always available. (mentioned by 2)

Facilities

- More lights in parking lots. (mentioned by 4)

- Cover or enclose walk from parking lots. (mentioned by 4)

Faculty

- Mercer needs to hire qualified instructors for evening courses, some are not qualified at all. (mentioned by 4)

- Get faculty who care. (mentioned by 3)

- Should replace teacher or class or refund money when a professor is conducting a class where students aren't learning and drop out, when 2/3 of class complain about lack of teaching ability.

- Insufficient monitoring of professors performance.

- Teacher should have been teaching to people that had no knowledge of the subject instead of teaching as a refresher.

- Frustrated with the instructor - turned off from taking other courses at MCCC.

- We were not given the opportunity to rate computer course or instructor at the end of the course.

- Teacher should spend more time with students who are willing to learn instead of spending time with those who disrupt the class.

- Instructor wouldn't help those having problems, said he didn't have time.

- Part-time instructors lack interest.

- Improve quality of data processing teaching staff.

Job Placement Assistance

- Better job placement assistance.

- Flight program should include job placement or employment.

Registration

- There must be a better way to run registration so students don't lose a day of work, many people are turned away by this. (mentioned by 3)

- Registration and withdrawing from courses could be made easier by helpful and courteous staff. (mentioned by 2)

- Chargeback system too slow to permit me to get my money and register for next course. Simplify system. (mentioned by 2)

- In-person registration long, frustrating process, should be organized to shorten time. (mentioned by 2)

Registration (continued)

- Mail registration is convenient, however, newspaper discriptions should be accurate, i.e., listing prerequisites.

- Reduce paperwork involved in registering out-of-county students.

- Print instructors' names on listing each semester.

- Policy of not allowing a student to drop a subject or change courses after attending one session should be modified.

- Should extend the withdrawal/cancellation period.

- I mailed form during registration time given in flyer and was notified later that the course was filled, do you follow the registration procedures you list in the paper?

- More specific information about beginning class dates at registration time.

- Registration procedures long lines and class cancellations are terrible at the last minute.

- Make your mail registration work.

- Mail registration excellent; in-person very unorganized and too long; had trouble changing address.

Senior Citizens

- Get programs started at Senior Citizens' Centers again; they were very much enjoyed and are missed. (mentioned by 26)

- Try to repeat or advance Senior Citizen interest topics - painting, crafts, writing, etc. (mentioned by 2)

- Take senior citizens off survey mailing list and use money saved for better use.

- Changed ground rules from 62 to 65 and left some of us stranded.

- Feel some sort of recognition should be given to the many Senior Citizens who take your courses for credit and receive many credits with excellent results.

- Wish to thank Mercer for letting Senior Citizens have free admission to plays; they are very professional and my hushand and I enjoy them.

Testing/Academic Testing Service/Tutoring

- Tests were frustrating, couldn't find out where I went wrong. (mentioned by 2)

- Testing Center concept seems to be very rigid, testing procedures in terms of student teacher feedback, get flexible allowing time to take exam, interesting idea that needs work.

- Computer Science requires testing to occur outside regularly scheduled classes - additional hours needed to achieve course completion, one additional night out and gas expense to take test.

Testing/Academic Testing Services/Tutoring (continued)

- Academic testing center make quieter, fix computer system so it isn't down so much.

- Tutoring staff were not pleasant, arrangements were very complicated to make and sometimes tutors didn't show up. (mentioned by 2)

Miscellaneous

- A little more discipline in the class room.

- New, bigger newsletter.

- Hate to see art galary in back corner of library to make room for computers - poor judgement and bad management of space - computers are happy in back corner, art is not!

- Bring in additional help for buy-back days at bookstore.

- Part-time students don't get a very clear picture of student services.

- A nursery or play room for children whose parents attend college part-time.

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE
FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES
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